



TENNESSEE  
COUNCIL



DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES

# BREAKING GROUND

NO 38

*ANNUAL ARTS ISSUE*

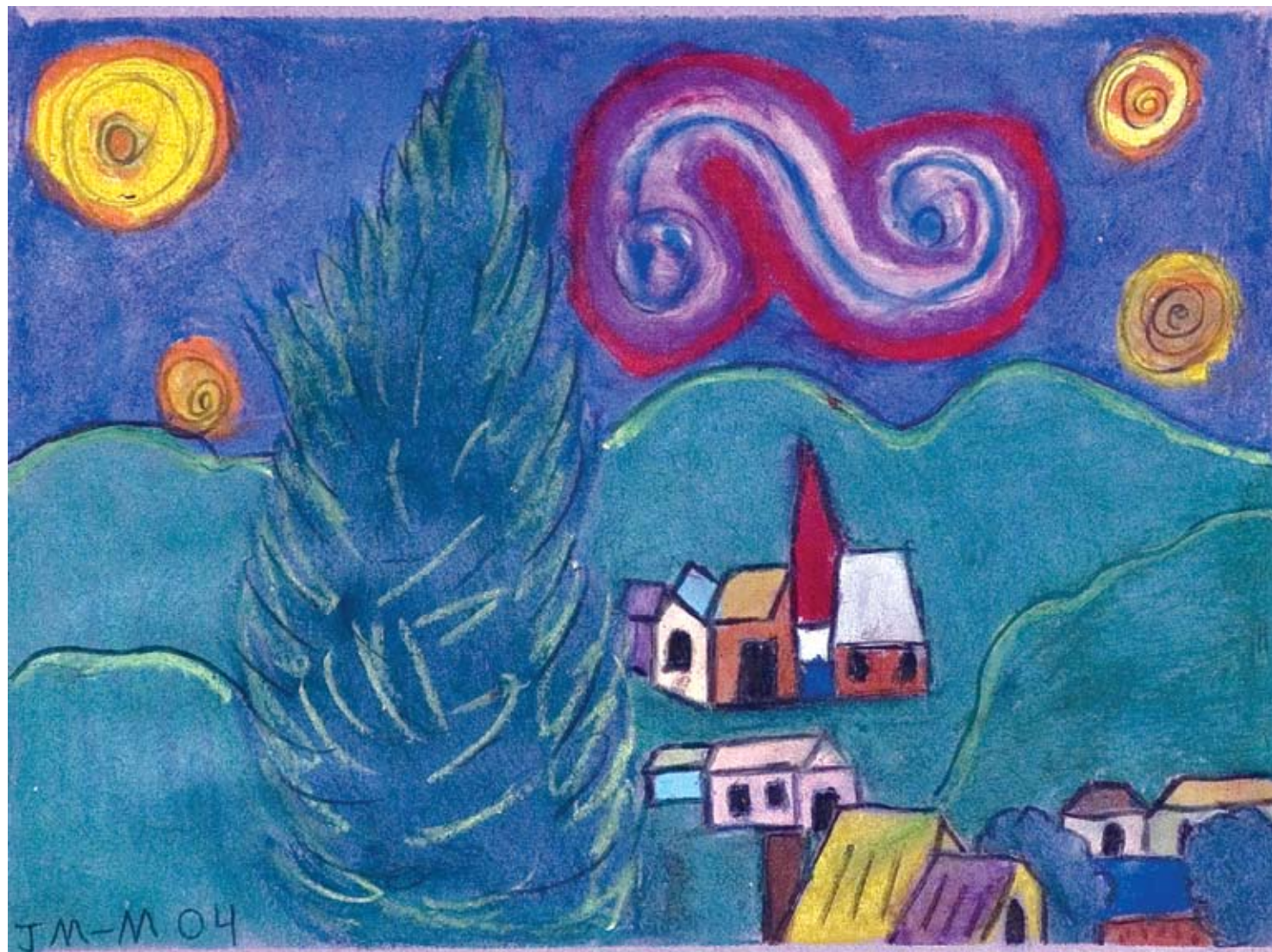
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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

THE CREATIVE DISCOVERY MUSEUM, CHATTANOOGA

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TENNESSEE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES





Untitled, Jacob Majors-Manley



Untitled, Drake Reece



Door to the Past, Andrew Michleski



COVER: *Lovely Lizzy B's Beautiful Hennaed Hand*, Gina Lynette

## SPEAK OR DON'T

Words are spoken every day,  
Wisdom shared or gave away.  
I can tell you what I need  
But you must watch to hear my creed.  
For I cannot speak to tell you why  
But I may speak by moving an eye.  
Will I speak through shake or shudder  
Or will you hear my softened mutter?  
Listen, watch, and hear my cry  
For I cannot speak to tell you why.  
Actions, sounds, and movement present  
Will let you know to what I consent.  
Pay attention and watch me close  
For I will tell you what matters most.

*Donna I. Litteral*

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# finding my way

BY SHERI GRIGSBY

THE SUN WAS WARM AGAINST MY CHEEK as I stood on the sidewalk trying to decide which way to turn. A few moments ago the path had seemed easy. Now, with people moving all around me and a digging noise near the sidewalk edge, I found myself a little out of sorts. I made the turn that I hoped was the right one and tapped my cane along the edge. There were, in fact, people planting on both sides of the sidewalk and I couldn't trail the edge as I had hoped. I came to the end and stopped, trying to gather my wits about me.

On the way over to the library an hour ago, the path had seemed easy enough. I had only two months of university life behind me, but I found that once I traveled in one direction, I could always get myself back. This day deemed itself different. Standing there I wondered if I should ask for help. But at eighteen I tended to be a little headstrong, and decided to just turn around and go back to the library. There, I could call disabled student services for a sighted guide.

Just as I turned to go back, my foot slipped off the edge of the curb and I realized that I was standing in front of a parking lot. Years of mobility training had taught me never to step into a parking lot but to go around, if possible. I found quickly that there were no other sidewalks except the one I was standing on. Since it was at an end, I was forced to turn around.

Just as I stepped back up on the curb, my foot slipped into a ravine next to the sidewalk. It was only about a foot deep, but it was enough to bring me down. I fell, backpack, cane and all. My pride was hurt much more than my body and I quickly got up and tried to regain my composure. But it was frayed and I was a little more than shaken.

Since childhood, I have always been very independent and few things dampened my spirit. But now, I stood nervous and afraid to even ask for help. I would have had to call out and I was too frightened to do that at that moment. I stood for what seemed like hours, but was probably only a moment in time, when I heard a voice next to me.

It was a boy, young sounding, but very friendly. He asked if he could help me to the University Center. This had been my intended destination and I nervously agreed.

Taking his arm, I realized that he was my height, about four feet eleven. He couldn't have been much taller than that. It struck me as odd, because I have always been the shortest person around. He led me through the grass and over to the main doors of the University Center. I was still shaken and surprised to realize I had only been a few feet from the door.

The boy asked me if this was where I needed to be and I said yes. But just as I started to say thank you and ask his name, he was gone. I stood in the middle of the sidewalk trying to figure out where he could have gone. It was as if his arm just vanished into thin air, right out of my hand.

I must have looked quite silly standing there because a girl I knew from algebra came up and asked if I was okay. I told her I was and asked if she had just seen the boy who had helped me. I hadn't heard his footsteps in the grass and I was a little dazed.

The girl laughed nervously and told me that there had been no boy around me. She went on to say that she had been standing right there and I had startled her because she hadn't seen me coming.

After repeating this incident to my blind roommate, we both decided that it was definitely different from any other situation we had been in before. I couldn't get the soft-spoken boy out of my mind. He didn't sound old enough to be a college student, and he was so small. His height was one thing, but his arm was very thin.

There was also something that struck me as odd. Usually when meeting someone for the first time, I have to tell them that I would like to take their arm. People tend to just grab on and pull me along. I have to stop and show them that I want to take their arm. This boy knew that. Of course there are those who know such things, but he did it so quickly, and I followed so easily. It was as if we had been walking together for years. I am not that comfortable usually with strangers. There is no telling where people will lead you. It's not that they are unkind, but they seem to think they know where you are going and never stop to think that they may be wrong.

I think the biggest difference in that day's events, was my trust of this stranger. I have replayed it over and over in my mind. No one on that sidewalk saw him at all.

I know in my heart that the boy was an angel. I have never been that afraid before or since. He sensed that and was by my side in seconds. When you are blind and walking around with just a cane to help you decipher your environment, you have to keep a clear head. After I fell that day, I didn't have a clear thought in my brain. My angel was there to guide me back to safety.



*Social Butterfly*, Linda Leonard

## MY FAVORITE PLACE IS GOD'S COUNTRY

BY ZACHARY TYLER

I LOVE TO BE IN GOD'S COUNTRY, the great outdoors. Being outdoors becomes my favorite place when I am with my family in the outdoors. I feel safe and secure. We love to camp, and I love the campfire. I can close my eyes and smell the wood burning and hear the crackling of the fire. My brother and I love to watch the fire grow in the dark of the night. We wake up to sounds of wild turkeys and feel the morning dew on the sides of our tent. We get our fly fishing gear together and we are off to hunt for Rainbow Trout. It is hard work and requires great skill. It can be a challenge to make everything look real to the trout, but we never give up. I am even happy if we don't catch any. I am

always the one to put the fish that we catch back into the water. I like to let them go because it keeps God's Country the way He wants it. I enjoy the sounds of the streams and learn many things by watching the trout feed. We enjoy our campfire in the evening when we are all together. Our hands get all sticky and gooey with toasted marshmallows from the yummy S'mores. When it is time to go to bed, we all cuddle in the tent and listen to the sounds of the night.

God's Country is my favorite place, you should try it!

THE END

## FROM DAWN 'TIL NOON

A man plays,  
Plucks the strings of his guitar.  
O' modern day bard!  
Play us a tune!  
Play from dawn 'til noon!  
It needs no words,  
Nor needs a rhyme.  
Play us a tune,  
Let our hearts fly!  
Unfettered from this dreary world,  
One note, then a chord.  
The sun is high,  
O' great man!  
Play 'til dusk,  
We know you can!  
We'll find the hidden avenues,  
Places lost to the modern man.  
That gives us hope,  
That gives us light.  
Keep playing, man!  
It's only the night!  
Give us a melody,  
One we'll not forget!  
Ignore the rain,  
Play into a new day!  
I hear your heartfelt tune,  
Now let the world join in!  
Play from dawn 'til noon!

*Nick Turner*



# KIDS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE ARTS AT CDM

BY JAYNE GRIFFIN

Serving children with disabilities through the arts is a way of life at the Creative Discovery Museum (CDM) in Chattanooga. It all started in 1998 with a program called *Kids Like You, Kids Like Me*, which began serendipitously through an off-hand community conversation about the need for a program that promoted disability awareness for children. After presenting *Kids Like You, Kids Like Me* successfully during the first year, the Museum was approached by a teacher of students with visual disabilities to see if we could do something for her students, some of whom were not permitted to go on field trips.

CDM had provided an after-school program called Club Discovery for several Parks and Recreation Centers, but by 1999 several factors beyond anyone’s control had caused the attendance at this program to diminish. This teacher’s request provided an opportunity to offer the program to a new audience. During the first year, this program was offered only to kids with visual disabilities, but later it was decided to expand the audience to children with all kinds of disabilities.

In 2001, the Siskin Children’s Institute approached CDM about co-offering a camp for children with autism. Friends Discovery Camp quickly became a laboratory for research that would help define how this camp could better serve the needs of children with autism. One result of that research showed that the inclusion of typically developing peers was beneficial in serving the needs of children with autism and likely with other disabilities. At this point, both Club Discovery and Friends Discovery Camp became inclusive programs with curricula aimed at the needs of children with disabilities, and adaptations made for typically developing children.

What does the arts curriculum in these programs for children with disabilities look like? *Kids Like You, Kids Like Me* is a comprehensive program that includes a teacher workshop, a free school tour and a weekend event. All of these components involve the arts.

During the workshop, teachers engage in activities that take them to local museums while simulating various disabilities such as communication, visual and mobility disabilities. The school tour finds children participating in visual art workshops and activities as they “try on” visual disabilities by wearing frosted goggles. Scented markers and textured paint allow children to experience success in making color choices, and a “blind pottery” workshop allows children to see how artists with visual disabilities can become visual artists.

Adding to this understanding are the artists-in-residence who visit CDM on a regular basis and are always included in the *Kids Like You, Kids Like Me* weekend events. Sandy Booher, an artist with a visual disability who has an M.F.A., often demonstrates pottery-making during the weekend events. Rick Gadbury, an artist who has a mobility



disability involving his arms, demonstrates his artistic capability by using his mouth instead of his hands.

The teachers in the after-school program, Club Discovery, select various themes for its curriculum. Children have become clowns, danced and drummed with African drummers, danced in wheelchairs and learned to toss pizza dough, among many other activities. Themes are chosen for their interest to the children and the activities that are provided to meet the goals of those themes are designed so that all children can be engaged in them. When observing a Club Discovery session, it is often impossible to detect which children have a disability and which are typically developing.

Friends Discovery Camp, which takes place during two weeks in the middle of the Summer, has a curriculum developed in partnership with the Siskin Children’s Institute. Social stories, which are written for each day of camp, are read together and show the children in a literal manner what will be happening during that day’s camp. This is a very important part of adapting to new environments for children with autism. Additionally, the children spend at least two days focused on arts activities that are sensory in nature, like making marbled paper using shaving cream. A closing celebration that includes invited family members showcases the children as they perform the songs they have learned.

For the future, programmers will continue to increase the level of what children with disabilities can accomplish in CDM’s various programs as they “push the envelope” in developing arts experiences that engage all children.

*Jayne Griffin is director of education at the Creative Discovery Museum.*

## ONCE UPON AN ADDICT

Tonight  
The empties  
Holding leaves  
And a lime colored  
Spider in the old  
Returnable bottle  
Crates are accommodating  
Bo like a bed of nails, but  
He’s come to watch the  
Children’s wheelchair  
Basketball championships  
Being held tomorrow—  
Remembering his Buymart  
Blade jackknifing was  
Nothing compared to  
A Jaws of Life cutter  
But it freed Jennifer from  
Oncoming flame in her  
Subcompact, and she’s  
To co-coach this fast  
Breaking fun zone where  
Amongst motorized grey  
Sports miracles Bo will  
Be presented with a  
Lifesaving certificate  
Over applause and cheers  
From sippy cup commandos  
Watching a waddling woman  
Ref in white and red maternity  
Wear award points, and post  
Game ride to Bo finally  
Accepting residential recovery.

*David S. Pointer*

## ALBINISM AND AUTISM DON’T HOLD HIM BACK

BY SAMANTHA JARRELL

My mom always says that Andrew my little brother is going to be different. Well, I don’t think he is. I know that he is the smartest four-year-old ever. He knows all the 50 states with a song and he can just about spell his name. He can build train tracks like a pro! But... he always needs sunscreen and he can’t go without it. He also does not stop doing things when told to stop. Maybe other four-year-olds are like that!

I am his big sister, Samantha, and I am 10 years old. I have a loft bed and he is always up there. He also loves to draw. He loves to play with Bo, a three-year-old next door, and he treats him like a good friend. Andrew took Taekwondo for a while but he did not like to stand still... he is going to try again in the fall because NOTHING holds him back!

## GOURMET FOOD

BY DEB CLARK

Night had come after a busy day and I was tired—tired and grumpy.

“Sit down, Mom, I’m going to fix your supper.” I sat down and repeated my son’s words in my mind. Jesse was going to fix my supper—this had never happened before!

“How many chicken nuggets do you want?” Jesse shouted from the kitchen.

Chicken nuggets? Definitely not a favorite of mine, but if Jesse was going to fix my supper, I wasn’t going to complain.

“How many do you want?” Jesse shouted again. “How many minutes?”

Jesse had been working on independent living skills with Rick, his therapist he had grown close to. He also went to a workshop once a month to learn new things.

Jesse is 27 and has developmental delays. He works at the local bowling center and does a great job—he just needs to work on doing more things for himself.

I looked up to see a smiling Jesse walk into the room with a plate of chicken nuggets in his hands.

I took a bite. “How are they Mom?” Did I say chicken nuggets were not a favorite of mine? Ask me what the best meal I have ever eaten was. You guessed it—chicken nuggets!!

## RYAN

Amazing, lively, and cute,  
He sits down and listens to my flute.  
If he knows you he will talk all day,  
Then outside and start to play.  
His voice is as strong as a lion’s roar,  
If you don’t watch him he will walk right out the  
door.

Rolling, riding on his bike,  
He is the one you have to like.  
As you can see I love him,  
And I will love him to the end.  
That’s Ryan.

*Emeline Osburn*



I THINK HIS NAME WAS JESS but a twelve-year-old wasn't 'spected ta remember adult first names since they couldn't use them back then. His last name was Daufel, which was easy to remember as it rhymed with "awful" which was my impression of the road into the old ranch. I remember his dog though—"Baldy" which he wasn't, being one of those shaggy mongrels with one eye green and the other gray. He did have a white patch atop his black face, so I guessed it was alright. My dad said he should'a been called "Go," since Rusty sent him on a task by snapping his fingers in some code and saying "go" to send him off. It was OK for me to call him Rusty since it wasn't a real name, but a reference to his red hair now mostly gone. Lots of freckles though like his peeling barn. On the way out dad had mentioned Rusty was pretty well off, but land poor and pretty stove up. Seems he had pretty much given up on the ranch when none of his sons wanted to run it. No ranch hands anymore—just Baldy to dash out and check on things like chickens, one ridin' horse and a couple of cows somewhere. 'Course he did lots of things for Rusty he couldn't do for himself after the tree fell on him.

Now I'm tellin' this story cuz now-a-days there's a bit of talk about Assistance Dogs and how best ta train 'em. Some argument too 'bout what is a legal Service Dog to take into shops and stuff, but that didn't make no difference to Rusty since he never went ta town much, and Ada was my aunt's name. An' if you was to ask about what Baldy did to assist his crippled self y'ould best prepare to sit a spell—but you wouldn't believe it anyhow. I didn't at first—took me a couple of days o' watchin' afore I had the gumption ta ask the why of it.

Ol' Rusty wanted a new road cut in so that grandkids could come out in cars instead of trucks, which is why we were there—dad being a surveyor and all. They wanted Rusty in an ol' folks home, but he wasn't 'bout ta leave the place. Don't know why I was there since Rusty planned to hold the rod and chain. I was assigned to stirring the lemonade and helping Baldy off the porch if he needed to go, seein' as how his knees were giving out and it took most of his strength to reel in that four-foot tongue.

Baldy was totally old now and didn't work anymore, which I thought as part of the whole place wasting away. But then I heard a whistle and a blur of white and spotty black flashed past to sit at Rusty's side where he and pa were plottin' on the hood of a doorless pickup. A couple of snaps, a grunt and wave of hand and the dog was off. I decided to call him "Dash". Pretty soon he returned with a straw hat for Rusty from the barn. "Snap, click, pop" and Dash vanished through the fence to open the

gate. Closed it too—latch and all, seein' as how on a ranch ya never let a gate swing free. I didn't see him 'till later but asked Baldy about the why of it. The old guy wasn't much on talk but would listen endlessly to my bucket of questions with soulful eyes and an occasional twitch of a broken tail—which I took for agreement. When the men returned for lunch dad was surprised at what I had learned but Rusty only commented that I had been left in good paws. He needed only to add a couple of thoughts to round out the story.

Baldy had sired a dozen litters or so and never had a problem letting the pups drift away. Then Rusty had that accident and sat down with Baldy fer a chat. Soon that trusty ranch dog had selected this one pup and balked at anyone even touching him. Seems he had stood between this youngin' and the gal who wanted him—bared teeth, growls and all. Yup, Dash was his and that was that. It's easy to understand that Baldy knew he was slowing down and could no longer run the fences and search for strays or tell Rusty when the culvert needed clearing or when the elderberries were ripe—all the things dogs are supposed to do. So he began training Dash to take over. About six months ago Baldy had settled onto the porch on an old rug he brought from the shed and hadn't moved much since. Occasionally Dash would come to him for assistance on some new task and they would lie together gnawing a bone. Leastwise Rusty said he never had to teach Dash a thing. Of course, I thought he was 'tugging the grass' a bit, but that was all right by me. Didn't matter whether the pup learned by watchin' Baldy or by fine honed instinct or by conversation with his pa—the job was done and Baldy could rest in comfort.

When Dash wandered in a bit later after helpin' Rusty upstairs fer a nap I tried a snap or two and even some common commands. Nada! All I got was a tilt-head whimsical stare. Then Baldy gave out a little yip and Dash came over wagging his tail. I ruffled his ears and tried tossing a stick. All I got back was more of the same silly expression. I told Baldy I just wanted to play a bit since I didn't have a dog at home. The old guy got up and waddled to the end of the porch where he could watch over the yard and gave another couple of yip-growls. Well, Dash was like a different animal altogether then—high-steppin' and rollin' in the dirt and running at me like I was a matador as he just grazed by. Then we all had some lemonade and cookies 'till the old folks got up. Another yip and Dash changed back into a wonder dog on the alert. I never told dad about the playin', but told Baldy, "Thanks for that, fellow," afore we left. Never saw any of them again. Never got a dog of my own neither.

Now I know you don't believe any of this—just write it off as a old-fart's jumbled memories, cause I'm about to settle in on a gentle rug of my own. In my life I've done a lot of training and teaching and helping folks, and tried to do more showing than telling, knowing that's how it works. Can't rightly say that I know what became of any of my students, and don't understand my own kids at all. My wife's got a Service Dog sumpin' special, the better fer being trained by her from a pup, but being only human trained ya see.

But I do know that somewhere out in Nevada there's a mixed breed black and white with scrambled eyes who understands clicks and whistles and what a fella wants, and what the land needs, and why people call thistles weeds and have never eaten fresh watercress—and helps anyone with a gimp and would know if you was blind, and wouldn't yip loud just 'cause you be deaf. Must be sixty years since Baldy passed on his special love. Funny about how people talk of "passing on" as being about dying. What those dogs passed on from generation to next isn't about dying at all—and we know who taught Baldy fer sure—and Dash's son—and more...

And some folks think that dogs don't have souls. They're right! Don't need 'em. God just snapped his fingers and said, "GO!" And you know that's the truth.

## BERNIE'S LESSON ON TIME

Your theory of time is oh so wrong.

You think an hour is short and a second is long.

There are 60 seconds in a minute and 60 minutes in an hour.

A second is shorter than a minute and a minute is shorter than an hour.

If you were in school you would get the worst grade you can get on time.

You would have to start your knowing all over again.

*Bernie Lynette*



*Untitled, Drake Reece*



*Puzzle, Grace Walker Goad*





*To Theresa, Glenn Gibbons*



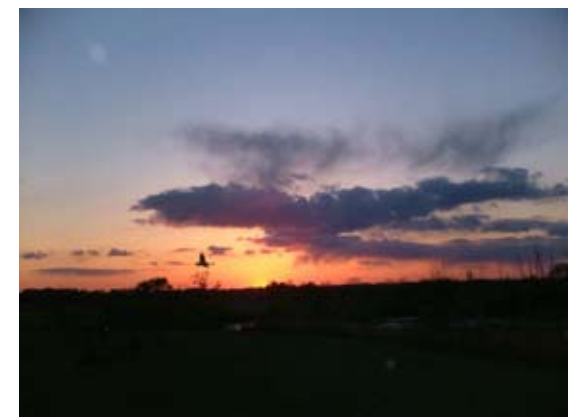
*Untitled, Taylor Reece*



*Cattails in the Wind, Michael Cummins*



*Untitled, Cynthia Davis*



*Goose in the Setting Sun 2, Andrew Michleski*

## CLOUDS

Clouds cover the sun  
like talking loudly  
covers up the peace  
of God.

*Michael Hovanec III*





Stanly Bridge, Nurmin George Mckar



Untitled, Taylor Reece



Old Grain House, Andrew Michleski



*“I want to be like  
Hannah Montana  
and have my own  
Disney show!”*

## RACHEL MAST IS A “NATURAL”

BY RON JEWEL

Over the last couple of years, I have had the wonderful privilege to have Rachel Mast participate in our children’s theatre productions here at the Bartlett Performing Arts and Conference Center. We host the Missoula Children’s Theater (MCT) project several times each year. Based out of Missoula, Montana, MCT’s touring theatre program touches the lives of thousands of children and parents each week of their performance season. A team of professional actors/directors typically arrives on a Monday to hold auditions, select participants and then, over the next six days, proceeds to mount a clever musical theatre adaptation of a children’s literary classic. The week climaxes with two Saturday performances for parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and scores of friends and neighbors of those on stage. It is in this context that Rachel came to join the theatrical fun.

Oftentimes, we adults can be guilty of giving lip service to the concept of “mainstreaming” children like Rachel. We feel the need to make special room for a child with Down syndrome like Rachel, and we tell ourselves that it is the politically correct thing to do to make room for any child with any number of similar personal challenges. But within just a moment or two, Rachel made us all believe that she was a “natural” for the stage and belonged there regardless of our foolish perspectives. Just like all the other kids, you could feel her competitiveness as the auditions commenced. Sparks of creativity and confidence caught the director’s eye and she was chosen to perform alongside all the other would-be actors.

*“I like to be on the stage  
and pretend.”*

Rachel joined the troupe of performers to learn their lines, dance steps and cues. And when the house lights went down they were all guilty of stealing scenes and stealing hearts. There is a great reward for the kids who truly participate in life, but there is an even greater reward for those of us that have the privilege of working alongside a child who steps up to challenges and handles her assignments with such finesse.

*Rachel Mast has been selected to participate in five Missoula Productions at the Bartlett Performing Arts and Conference Center: Pinocchio, The Pied Piper, Little Mermaid, Jungle Book and Beauty Lou and the Country Beast.*

*Ron Jewel is the director of the Bartlett Performing Arts and Conference Center in Bartlett, Tennessee.*

## TIME JUST STOPPED

Time just stopped  
Just as she stopped  
by for just a  
cup of coffee.

She walked up to  
the counter  
just as our  
regular customer Joe  
and ordered our  
Red Eye

A tear dropped down  
her cheek  
as she  
struggled to pay.  
Joe offered to pay. She said no thanks.  
I can get it.

Oh it’s not cause of not havin’ money  
It was cause of the  
struggle to get to  
her money.

After wiping my own tears  
and clearing the big lump  
in my throat. I asked...  
How did you lose it?

She softly replied...  
In the war.

That’s when Joe insisted  
That Red Eye  
is on me  
and  
on every American.

It’s not cause she did not have money  
but  
It’s cause  
she is  
Our Hero  
cause she let  
Time Just Stop.

*Lee Ann Lasher*





## IN MY POCKET

BY SHERI GRIGSBY

ONE EVENING, an hour after regularly scheduled bedtime, I was still engrossed in picking up my children's toys. The day had been long, with us spending most of our time indoors. This meant there were more playthings lying around than on the usual day. It didn't seem that getting to the bottom of the pile was a feasible dream.

The day seemed to have sucked my will to love and nurture my beautiful children into its ravenous teeth. Being a visually impaired mom and living in an apartment surrounded by parking lots can be extremely taxing. Some days, not being able to drive hinders even the most well thought out plans for excursions. My children usually don't mind staying in, but on this particular day it seemed that cabin fever was in abundance.

My frustration rose with each plaything I put away. The room was filled with expensive playthings that my children pulled out, only to reexamine and then curtly fling to the floor. I found myself wondering why they wanted toys at all? Picking up musical toys, puzzles, electronic learning games and dolls that do everything under the sun is common practice.

The funny thing is, even though I see these things on the floor, I rarely see these precious valuables in the kids' hands. I know, logically, that they must have been there, at some point, for them to make it to the floor, but actually finding a child with one of these toys in their hand is rare.

Now that the day is done and my patience quickly evaporating, I stand in the middle of the room trying not to cry. Just when I think things will grow quiet, and the day will end in a serene way, I find more things, stashed under pillows, behind the door, under the bed, anywhere but the designated toy box.

On this night, my normally calm, tolerant demeanor had just about vanished, when I picked up a small pair of denim shorts from the floor belonging to my three-year-old. I scanned the latest topic of my findings trying to decide if they were dirty clothes material or intact and clean dresser drawer material. I decided that the latter would work.

Just as I reached to open the dresser drawer, the owner of the shorts came screeching down the hallway.

"There is something in the pocket, Mommy. It's my special stuff. Please don't throw it away."

I thought I had checked the pockets and, feeling nothing there, had been about to put them away. What was she talking about? I hurriedly reached in to scoop whatever it was out. I didn't think I could take one more thing tonight. What could possibly be so important to a three-year-old? After all, there was very little room in the tiny shorts pocket anyway.

The contents spilled into the palm of my hand: a purple miniature doll brush that measured no more than an inch, a black Barbie doll shoe missing its match, a tiny blue hair roller, a little pink rubber purse boasting a flower, a glitter-encrusted red lid to something or other and a tiny pair of yellow sunglasses, all stashed in this little hideaway. I didn't see the reason for the outburst. What did these things mean in the scheme of everyday life? What, if anything, did they have to do with one another?

But standing in front of me, holding out an eager little hand was definitely an interested party. I sighed to myself, and relented that these were from several different locations in the room. How they had all made it into that little pocket was an amazing thing.

As I stood holding my little girl's loot, I realized that they were a part of her. They signified what mattered to her. She had thought it through and spent most of the day collecting these little treasures and had carried them around with her until bedtime.

All of the frustration, and tension from a few minutes earlier was now gone. I stood immobile in the center of the room thinking of all that mattered to me. I found myself thinking about the totes stashed in the attic. There were both girls' first walking shoes, Christmas bears and a small round rattle that I bought before

my second daughter was born. All were ensconced safely in my mind. Would someone think these little insignificant trinkets unimportant? What did these things mean in the scheme of my everyday life? What, if anything, did they mean to anyone else and what did they have in common, except being valuable to me?

I handed over the treasure and listened as my daughter trotted happily away. I sat down on the bed, just holding the shorts, and pondered. We have spent so much time thinking of all the big things in life. How our children will grow up, learn and acquire all of life's lessons.

Would there be enough money for college? I realized, my worries meant nothing in the broad picture of my children's lives. They don't stop their play to think of the time and effort we spend trying to give them the best we can possibly give them.

While my girls were infants, I placed so much value on educational toys and the right shoe to protect and stimulate good foot growth. Once they reached toddler status my focus moved to the proper nutritious diet and books that would both stimulate and foster early literacy. Now that one child is in the first grade and the other is heading toward preschool, I am starting to worry about bigger problems.

So far, most of my goals have been reached. But I don't think my girls ever noticed. The entire world lay in the palm of my hand. These were the things she treasured. These were the things that meant the most to her. Small trinkets of no value to myself, but everything to a three-year-old.

## CAMP SUMMERSIGN: EXPLORING THE ARTS

BY BRANDON ABBOTT



For children across America, Summer is a time to relax by the pool, to watch television and to play Xbox. For the children of Camp SummerSign, however, Summer is a chance to perform in a musical, publish a yearbook and even write, direct and record a movie. Ranging in age from 6 to 17, these children embrace the arts as a way to communicate their passion for life and their determination to spread the Gospel, despite the challenges of being hard of hearing.

Camp SummerSign, a ministry of Brentwood Baptist Deaf Church in Brentwood, is an eight-week camp designed for children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, their siblings or children of adults who are Deaf. While there is a wide range of activities at the camp, among the most notable is a complete immersion in the arts.

Divided into four age-appropriate groups, children are encouraged to express themselves in a variety of ways. Ruth Ann Bruffey, a volunteer at the camp, works with the younger groups as they explore the arts through crafts. Paper, colors, scissors and glue abound as these young artists tackle the visual arts with a fervor no less than that of Michelangelo himself!

All age groups also participate in activities designed to awaken the inner-actor in each of these children. Drama workshops give the young people an opportunity to act in skits using ASL (American Sign Language). Drama not only helps kids develop their creative talents, but also gives them a unique opportunity to develop their abilities to communicate with others in creative ways.

The dramatic aspects of the arts are explored further and combined with music as campers perform in a stage musical. In 2007, campers treated friends and family to a stage adaptation of *Daniel in the Lion's Den*, proving that the challenges of disability are no match for the power of creativity and the arts. This concept also is illustrated by the older campers, who worked in conjunction with the Alcohol and Drug Council of Middle Tennessee, under the direction of Laura Lekowicz, to produce a cinematic effort focusing on the dangers of substance abuse. *Alone in a Hearing World* was written by the campers and explores the challenges of a thirteen-year-old who turns to drugs as he struggles to find his place in a world of hearing people.

Each of these activities is designed not only to help young people develop their creative talents, but to instill in them the truth that God

made them unique and fully equipped to serve His purpose in their lives.

Every year, campers and camp staff work together, under the direction of Cheryl Sims, to produce a yearbook. This yearbook serves not only to remind campers of their experiences over the Summer, but also gives them a tool to share these experiences with their families. The camp staff feel that support and understanding at home is paramount to the camp's full impact on its campers. This book helps to open dialogue between children and parents, as well as siblings and friends.

Camp SummerSign gives children a unique opportunity to develop their skills, their talents, their self esteem and their relationship with God in ways that are specific to the challenges they face every day. Art activities give these children tangible ways to see God working in their own lives. Whether through crafts, drama, music or movies, kids learn that they can and should find creative ways to express themselves and share the message of the Gospel.

*Brandon Abbott serves as both Web and interim public relations director for Brentwood Baptist Church.*



GINA LYNETTE JACOB MAJORS-MANLEY LINDA LEONARD GRACE WALKER GOAD ABOUT MICHAEL CUMMINS GLENN GIBBONS CYNTHIA DAVIS NURMIN GEORGE MCKAR BERNADETTE RESHA ERIN BRADY WORSHAM the DONNA LITTERAL NICK TURNER EMELINE OSBURN DAVID S. POINTER ARTISTS BERNIE LYNETTE MICHAEL HOVANEC III LEE ANN LASHER TINA MARASCIA SHERI GRIGSBY ZACHARY TYLER SAMANTHA JARRELL DEB CLARK KEN MULLER ANDREW MICHLESKI DRAKE REECE TAYLOR REECE

ART

*Untitled* (p.2), *Rabbit* (p.20). [Jacob Majors-Manley](#)’s paintings have been exhibited numerous places, including the Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital, the Ryman Auditorium, the Tennessee Performing Arts Center, the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center and Legislative Plaza. He has a hearing disability and loves to learn technique from different artists.

*Social Butterfly* (p.5). [Linda Leonard](#) is an executive secretary in the Self-Determination Intake Department of the West Tennessee Regional Office of the Division of Mental Retardation Services. This is a portrait of KR, a co-worker and friend.

*Puzzle* (p.9). [Grace Walker Goad](#) has been painting since she was four, working with private art teachers and therapists. The 13-year-old has received international acclaim in the last year, including an appearance on the autism segment of ABC’s *The View*.

*Cattails in the Wind* (p.10). [Michael Cummins](#) participates in art workshops at Hilltoppers, Inc. in Crossville.

*To Theresa* (pp.10–11). [Glenn Gibbons](#) is a 67-year-old artist who primarily draws pictures of houses, because “that is what your home in heaven looks like.” He moved out of the Arlington Developmental Center in 1998 and lives in his own home with a roommate.

*Untitled* (p.11). [Cynthia Davis](#) loves to write and works with watercolors and pen and ink. She also makes pendants from stones and walking sticks.

*Stanly Bridge* (p.12), *Aelya* (p.19). [Nurmin George Mckar](#) was born in Egypt. She has been deaf since birth and developed a love of art at age six.

*The Barn with Wreath* (p.19). [Bernadette Resha](#) has shown her paintings in many cities and states. Ms. Resha has sold many of her paintings and accessories from her shows and from her Web site, [www.bernadetteresha.com](#).

*America is Watching* (p.20). Nashville artist and writer, [Erin Brady Worsham](#), recently opened her second one-woman show, “Artist’s Proof,” at the Tennessee Arts Commission. Ms. Worsham is a graduate of Partners in Policymaking and was a featured speaker at the 2007 Tennessee Disability MegaConference.

POETRY

*Speak or Don’t* (p.2). [Donna Litteral](#) is a behavior analyst at Greene Valley Developmental Center, where she has worked with people with developmental disabilities for 22 years.

*From Dawn ‘Til Noon* (p.5). [Nick Turner](#) is a 15-year-old student at White County High School who has Asperger’s syndrome. He loves to spend time drawing in his room.

*Ryan* (p.7). [Emeline Osburn](#) is a 7th grader at Page Middle School. Ryan is a little boy who has a disability, who Ms. Osburn helps in an after school program. She hopes to be a Special Education teacher when she grows up.

*Once Upon an Addict* (p.7). [David S. Pointer](#) has recently published poems in “The Blue Collar Review,” “Ilya’s Honey,” and elsewhere. He lives with his two daughters in Murfreesboro.

*Bernie’s Lesson on Time* (p.9). [Bernie Lynette](#) is a nine-year-old boy who enjoys reading biographies, contemplating physics, using technology and building incredible inventions from Legos and recycled materials.

*Clouds* (p.11). [Michael Hovanec III](#) is a nine-year-old boy with Asperger’s syndrome. He enjoys reading, drawing and creating things with Legos. He wrote *Clouds* at age seven.

*Time Just Stopped* (p.13). [Lee Ann Lasher](#) is a Middle Tennessee regional investigator in the Protection from Harm Unit, Cloverbottom Developmental Center.

*This is My Friend, He Has Autism* (p.17). [Tina Marascia](#) is a graduate of the 06–07 Partners in Policymaking class.

PROSE

*Finding My Way* (p.4), *In my Pocket* (p.14). Partners in Policymaking graduate [Sheri Grigsby](#) lives in La Vergne with her husband and two daughters. She is currently working on her second novel.

*My Favorite Place is God’s Country* (p.5). [Zachary Tyler](#)’s submission won first place for the 4th grade in Dogwood Elementary School’s Reflections Contest.

*Albinism and Autism Don’t Hold Him Back* (p.7). [Samantha Jarrell](#) is 10 years old and attends Mitchell Neilson Elementary School in Murfreesboro. She has earned her gold belt in Taekwondo and has plans to get her black belt within two years. Samantha has a delightful imagination and is a born leader. She is the sister of Andrew, who is four years old, and Alex, who is nine years old. She is active in her church and community.

*Gourmet Food* (p.7). [Deb Clark](#) lives in Nolensville with her son, Jesse, and husband, Willie. She has bipolar disorder and epilepsy. Jesse is a great cook! All three work at Franklin Entertainment Center, where Jesse continues to do a great job.

*Snap* (p.8). [Ken Muller](#) is a VietNam veteran with a disability living in Knoxville.

PHOTOS

*Lovely Lizzy B’s Beautiful Hennaed Hand* (Cover). [Gina Lynette](#) is the deputy director of Person-Center Practice for the Division of Mental Retardation Services, the mother of Berns and Gillian, and an artist and photographer.

*Door to the Past* (p.2), *Goose in the Setting Sun 2* (p.11), *Old Grain House* (p.12), *Day Train* (p.19), *Old Seed Co.* (p.20). [Andrew Michleski](#) lives in Kenton. He has a service animal that supports him in his mobility, and that will help him return to work, go to photography school and hunt and fish.

*Untitled* (p.2), *Untitled* (p.9). [Drake Reece](#) is in the 5th grade in Cleveland. He has won top prizes in photography and drama in the State of Tennessee Church of God Junior Talent competition.

*Untitled* (p.10), *Untitled* (p.12). [Taylor Reece](#) is 13 years old and attends high school in Cleveland. Taylor and his brother, Drake, were named the first ever “Junior Caregivers of the Year” by the East Tennessee Regional Office of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

THIS IS MY FRIEND, HE HAS AUTISM

There is a boy in my class, who isn’t like the rest  
He cannot tell me what he wants; sometimes we have to guess

The colors that I love so much, so bright with blues and pink  
Create, for him, a barrier, to process and to think

And when the class is noisy, too much at one time  
He needs to find a quiet spot, he wants to run and hide

If he cannot understand, everything we do  
We help him find a focus, so he can join in too

I see how much he wants to make and play with friends  
Yet sometimes he seems nervous, his fears are hard to mend.

And so each day I try to show that I am one to trust  
All of us deserve a friend, which, in life’s a must

And I can tell as each day passes, our friendship has a start  
And in my friend I’ve found a boy, who’s sweet and kind and smart

*Tina Marascia*

ETTAC’S KIDSFEST BRINGS COMMUNITY TOGETHER FOR ART & MUSIC

BY LOIS SYMINGTON



KidsFest was held at Ijams Nature Center in Knoxville on Saturday, June 30, as a celebration of how music and art can be inclusive, accessible and beneficial to children of all abilities. Activities included dance performances by the Sunshine Ambassadors, a dance troupe of young people with Down syndrome; pottery making and demonstrations; a musical instrument “petting zoo” and make-and-take workshop; and an opportunity for those attending to share what freedom means to them. Assistive technology devices were available for children who needed assistance in speaking, writing or reading.

Jeff Comas, an area musician and music teacher, showed how untraditional instruments such as boom-whackers and paper can be used to create music. Children also learned that the notes they painted on

a staff could be turned into amazing music—the KidsFest Symphony! A young man with autism demonstrated his ability to do intricate movements with the Tenpenny Rapper Sword Dancers.

Whether through stories, dances, music or art, 200 children with and without disabilities had a joyous day celebrating and demonstrating their abilities and potential to participate in the arts. KidsFest was made possible through a generous grant from Variety—the Children’s Charity of Eastern Tennessee, the East Tennessee Foundation, Ball Corporation and ETTAC’s HeartSong Center for Accessible Music and Art.

*Lois Symington is executive director of East Tennessee Technology Access Center.*



# THE RENAISSANCE CENTER PUTS PAINTBRUSHES IN THE HANDS OF DICKSON RESIDENTS

By Andrea Frankenfeld

“Art is therapy—no matter who uses it,” is Hannah Maxwell’s motto. Ms. Maxwell has been the Studio Manager of The Renaissance Center in Dickson for two years. The Center is committed to promoting education by providing experiences of learning and self-awareness, encouraging excellence and rewarding creativity.

Ms. Maxwell considers it a privilege to teach people with disabilities—since all studio art classes are open to people of all abilities. Many students with disabilities don’t come looking for classes specifically designed for them, but those exist too.



Ms. Maxwell’s passion for helping others see the therapeutic value of art shines through everything she does. Listening to her talk with pride about her students—with and without disabilities—and their accomplishments would make anyone sit up and take notice. The classes that Ms. Maxwell teaches focus on two-dimensional art, like painting, but include three-dimensional media from time to time, like clay or origami.

David takes private lessons from Ms. Maxwell. Although he is nonverbal, David is extremely expressive through his art and about his love for it. One day, he refused to stay home from class despite the 103-degree temperature!

The Common Ground Workshop was a day of Full Circle Art—an organization committed to expressing unity and peace through art. The day included music, visual arts and food, with an afternoon of African

drumming. With the help of Dickson Developmental Services and the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, the Renaissance Center reached out to the community of Dickson. Approximately 15 people with and without disabilities participated in the loosely structured activities. “If someone was really interested in finishing a piece of artwork rather than joining the drum circle, we were happy for them to do so,” says Ms. Maxwell. “Some people were having so much fun with the music, they didn’t want to leave the drum circle to work on the collaborative artwork.”

Matthew drives from Clarksville to Dickson—about an hour away—to come to art class. It wasn’t until the end of the semester that Ms. Maxwell discovered that Matthew had Asberger’s syndrome. He’s not the only student that Ms. Maxwell has worked with a whole semester, or sometimes years, before knowing they’ve been working with a disability. Her goal is to provide a space for her students to relax and have fun—not to analyze them.

Brenda, another student, was told by her doctors after an accident that she’d never be able to use her arm. This is the same arm that Ms. Maxwell has seen her use to paint gorgeous pictures. “Art is a healing experience, even though it’s not always planned that way,” says Ms. Maxwell. “The therapeutic value of art comes suddenly.”

Jeannie, who has a physical disability, is losing the use of her hands, but has always wanted to do artwork. She learned to use a paintbrush and created beautiful, realistic visions from her dreams. Ms. Maxwell was delighted with her student’s detailed paintings, and now Jeannie has her own studio set up at home.

Ms. Maxwell wants to make the Renaissance Center more available to members of the disability community. For more information, call Hannah Maxwell at 615-740-5565, or visit the Renaissance Center website at [www.rcenter.org](http://www.rcenter.org).

*Andrea Frankenfeld is an educator and free-lance writer.*



*Aelya, Nurmin George Mckar*



*Day Train, Andrew Michleski*



*The Barn with Wreath, Bernadette Resha*

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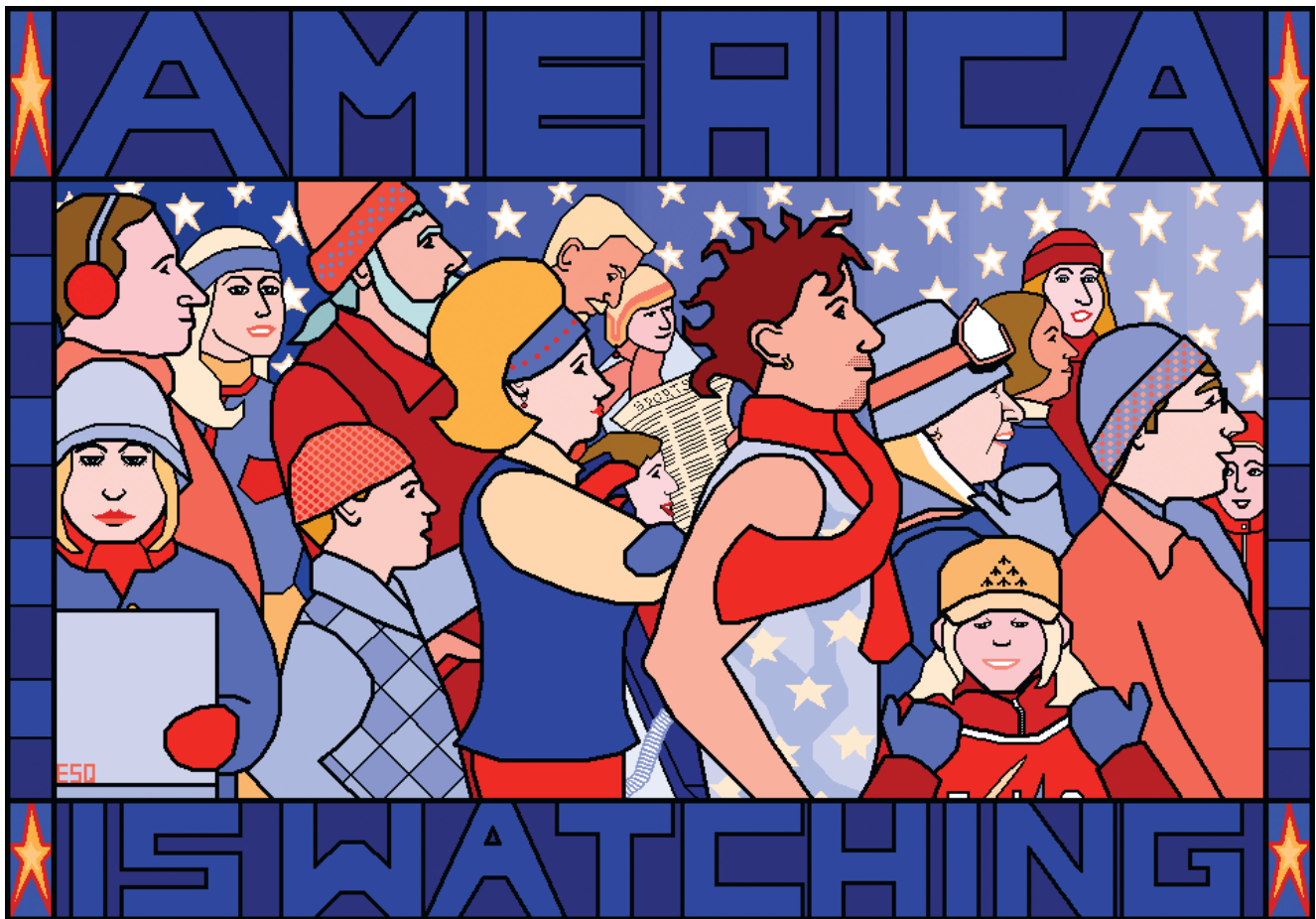
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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUBMISSION

Due to space limitation, we regret that we are not able to include every submission in the *Breaking Ground Arts Issue*. If your submission is not included, we encourage you to submit again next year. We will keep your submission on file and it is possible that it may be printed in subsequent issues of *Breaking Ground*, including next year's Arts Issue.

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